

more; so that at that very time, on the 26th March, the Government had no policy whatever. But, Sir, something took place then which gave the Government a policy, and what was it? Sir, on the very day the hon. gentleman was speaking here in this House, when he stated that the half-breeds of the North West had no more rights than the ordinary settler, that all they could ask for was a homestead or pre-emption, on that very day the fight at Duck Lake was going on; and the bullets of the Duck Lake fight did more to settle this question than six long years of prayers and petitions had done. Six long years of constant petitioning had failed to secure justice for these people, had failed to procure a remedy of the grievances of which they complained, but the bullets of Duck Lake immediately set the Government in motion and immediately brought them to terms. On the 30th March, four days afterwards, the Government came down with an Order in Council in which, for the first time, the rights of the half-breeds were to some extent acknowledged. Not completely acknowledged however; by this Order in Council the half-breeds were allowed a certain grant of land, not however, in extinguishment of the Indian title, but with conditions of settlement. Then commissioners were appointed and proceeded to the disturbed districts. One of the commissioners, Mr. Street, being on the spot, looking at the matter, advised the Government that it was necessary in order to satisfy these people to give them a special grant of land, the same as had been given to the half-breeds in Manitoba, irrespective of conditions of settlement; and since that time forsooth, the commissioners have been distributing scrip amongst the half-breeds in North-West Territory. At last Mr. Speaker, these men who have been petitioning for that special grant ever since 1878 and who up to March, 1885, could not obtain it—at last they succeeded in their request. Still, Sir, justice is doubly just and doubly precious when it is freely and gently given, but justice loses most of its value when it is tardily and grudgingly conceded as it was on this occasion. Even last night the hon. gentleman would not say that in so doing, the Government were doing justice to the half-breeds of Manitoba; he would not say that he recognised their rights; he simply said that he would do it, and did it for the sake of peace. For the sake of peace, when we were in the midst of war! for the sake of peace, when insurgents were in the field, and when blood had been shed! Does the hon. gentleman suppose that this tardy concession will conciliate the feelings of the half-breeds? No, Sir; the feeling that will remain in their hearts will be that they were denied their rights while they confined themselves to petitioning for them, but as soon as they took up their old rusty muskets they brought the Government to their knees and secured what constitutional means could not obtain. This is the feeling which will remain in the hearts of the half-breeds. It is the same with regard to the unenumerated claims in Manitoba. There were a certain number of half-breeds who had not been enumerated in Manitoba, who had also a right to a special grant of land. They petitioned the Government; the North-West Council also petitioned the Government, the friends of the Government in the North-West petitioned, and all without avail. But on the 9th April, after the rebellion had been raging for some time, the Government again came to their knees and granted to threats and violence what had been refused to petitions and prayers. In fact, the Government have not even the courage of Falstaff, for, if I remember rightly, Falstaff said that: "Were reasons as plentiful as berries, I would not give a reason upon compulsion." But the Government would not give anything except upon compulsion. They resisted the prayers and petitions of the settlers, but when the settlers came with arms in their hands the Government immediately yielded, and granted their requests. Sir, there was, as I said before, another claim which was made by the half-breeds—it was that

they should not be disturbed in their holdings. It was that they were to be allowed to occupy their holdings such as they were, and keep them on without molestation. The Government had adopted the American, the rectangular system of surveying, and a very good system it is—I have not a word to say against it—but it seems nothing but fair and right that where there had been settlement in advance of surveys, the Government should have acknowledged that fact, and the surveys should have been made according to the settlements. It is characteristic of all French settlements in America that they have all been made upon the banks of rivers and all the lands divided so that the people can live close to one another. That is a feature of the French race. The French race, it will be admitted without dispute, is of a more sociable disposition than the Teutonic race. The characteristics of the two races are distinctly marked in Lower Canada. In Lower Canada, if you go through an old country settlement you will find the farm houses scattered in all directions, wherever is most convenient for the farmer. They may be one mile or more apart; but the moment you go into the French settlement, you will find all the farm houses on the road side, all within a stone's throw of one another, so as to afford the people easy and constant communication. In fact the people of Lower Canada, in all the French settlements, are in constant and daily communication. This is a characteristic not only of French settlements in Lower Canada, but of all French settlements in America. It is the same in old France. The rural population in France chiefly dwell in hamlets, in Lower Canada as close to one another as the circumstances of the country will allow. And I found this feature in the old Acadian settlements in Nova Scotia. In King's county, for instance, in the old classic land of Evangeline, there was a settlement in the old days that was called Rivière aux Canards, there the farms have been settled in narrow strips; all are close to each other, and the settlement is called to-day, so far as I know, by the suggestive name Canard Street. That, in the eyes of the population, represents a street more than an ordinary farm settlement. The adventurers whose blood now runs in the veins of the half-breed population in the North-West, came from France and Lower Canada. The same trait exists among them. The half-breed population in the North-West to-day, wherever they have a settlement, have taken their lands in exactly the same way as have all the French population, whether on the banks of the St. Lawrence, in Acadia or in Louisiana. When the Government took possession of the North-West they found those settlements on the Saskatchewan River in exactly the same fashion as all other French settlements. The lands were divided into narrow strips, and the farms were all close upon one another. Was it anything but right and fair that the holdings of those people should be respected; that the lands which had been divided by the people among themselves should not be interfered with, and that the rectangular surveys should give way so soon as they came in contact with settlements. This was the policy followed by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) when he was in charge of the Department of the Interior. I noticed yesterday that the First Minister, when he addressed himself to this subject, passed rather gently, lightly and sweetly over it. He did not say much upon it. He merely said that the hon. member for Bothwell, when at the head of the Department, had not been so diligent as he might have been. But he extolled his own activity. He said that the Government of which he was a member had displayed the greatest diligence in the matter. Not only did the hon. gentleman make that double assertion, but he said he would prove it. And then, with a somewhat ostentatious manner, he took a map and had laid it on the Table. Look at the map, he said, and it will show how much we have surveyed. And so soon as the House rose I saw a